SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR NORTHERN PEOPLES: CANADA AND THE CIRCUMPOLAR STORY

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FOREWORD

In presenting this report it is hoped that it will provide the reader with a clear and concise overview of the issues in political development for northern peoples around the circumpolar world. There are presented some useful insights into the various political developments and initiatives that are of interest and relevance to the NWT. The report shows that there are precedents that lend support to the goals and objectives being pursued in the Canadian north through such mechanisms and processes as the NWT Constitutional Alliance, Comprehensive Aboriginal Claims negotiations and the National Constitutional amendment process.

The NWT is not alone in its struggle for greater regional autonomy and there is much to be learned from the successes, failures and innovations of other northern communities. It is also evident that the experiences, expertise and progress made in the NWT can be of value and a source of encouragement to our northern circumpolar neighbours.

At the time this report was written the process of political change in the NWT was experiencing a frustrating period of apparent inactivity and uncertainty. This changed dramatically during the weekend of January 12 - 13, 1985 at a Constitutional Alliance meeting in Yellowknife.

The Alliance met in an effort to reach an agreement on a political boundary between a western and an eastern (Nunavut) territory. Major progress was achieved with the parameters of a tentative boundary agreed to by the members.

One of the key issues to be resolved was in which territory the Inuvialuit communities should be located. Both Forums were seeking to have these communities located within the boundaries of the new territories while the Inuvialuit continue to seek guarantees for their future regional and cultural identity through a regional government structure regardless of which territory they may finally be located.

A process for the resolution of this issue was agreed to by the Alliance when it agreed that the WCF explore immediately with the Inuvialuit a set of agreed principles to enable the Inuvialuit to find a satisfactory future in a western territory.

Further, the NCF and the WCF agreed in principle that the western arctic region be part of a western territory, subject to the satisfactory resolution of negotiations between the Inuvialuit and the WCF on their future in a western territory. The agreement in principles went on to state that subject to further work done by the Dene, Metis and Inuit working in their land-use overlap study which is now proceeding well, the WCF and the NCF agree in principle on an approximate Nunavut boundary from the 60th parallel to the south-east corner of the COPE claim area of the Inuvialuit, then northwest along the eastern border of the Inuvialuit settlement region.

This agreemeent on a tentative boundary is subject to possible modification based on the opinions of communities in the Kitikmeot West Region (Coppermine, Cambridge Bay, Bay Chimo and Bathurst Inlet).

The Alliance will meet again on February 8, 1985 to further discuss the precise location of the political boundary and determine the process of public ratification of the final boundary proposal to be recommended by the Alliance. With the boundary issue now close to being resolved, further progress toward political self determination in the NWT is likely to proceed at a healthy pace again.

For those who are concerned with the future well being of Canada's northland and the self-determination of its various peoples this brief paper should provide food for thought. It should help bring an international perspective to the issues and challenges that face the NWT now and over the next few years.

This report was commissioned by the Aboriginal Rights and Constitutional Development Secretariat, Government of the Northwest Territories and written by Mr. Peter Jull of Ottawa. Mr. Jull has worked extensively in a resource capacity with the Constitutional Alliance, the Nunavut Forum and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (Canada). The contents of this report do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of the Northwest Territories or the Executive Council.

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A report for discussion.
By Peter Jull.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the northern countries of the world, northern peoples are seeking new forms of government, clearer legal rights and a significant role in the economic developments affecting their territories. These people may be Dene or white Europeans, Inuit or Metis, Cree or Lapps, but they are working to achieve the same basic ends.

In the other northern countries as in Canada, the push northwards of the industrial search for energy and other resources has begun a new era. Whatever the previous experience of northern peoples with encroaching development, one can at least say that this one is apparently more broadly based, more relentless and more significant for the future lifestyles and livelihoods of northerners. For that reason the arrangements to be made to accommodate these changes, and to accommodate the reactions of northerners to them, must be carefully chosen if there is to be social peace, economic well-being and balanced growth. What has been learned in past boom cycles in Canada and elsewhere may be useful today, just as other northern peoples are watching northern Canada with great interest to see how we move ahead in developing new political structures at local, regional and territory-wide level, as well as through the national constitutional discussions.

If we look at Canadian experience in this circumpolar context, it may strike us differently from the way we usually look at it. That is, we may find that the way Canada accords powers to northern regions and governments is not the only way, and that the actions and demands of northern peoples in Canada make a kind of universal northern sense which few Canadian news media or federal policy-makers have understood. We may see that northern areas generally

have needs and problems different from southern ones and, therefore, that consideration of different solutions would be useful. Finally, we may learn from the specific mistakes and from the concrete successes of other peoples and other governments.[1]

The international (or circumpolar) north is a politically and, in many countries such as Canada, economically disadvantaged region, a fact little known outside its bounds. Here on the northern periphery of many of the world's richest and most industrialised states ancient societies built around renewable resource economies are struggling to assert their full legal, political and cultural personalities. They do so as minority peoples and minority regions in larger entities - national states, trade and regional blocs, military alliances. These societies predate the national states to which they "belong", yet it is the arrogance of modern times that their self-images and collective demands are often dismissed by the majorities in those states as quaint or irrelevant, even absurd.

Despite these difficulties, the northern circumpolar peoples are experiencing a considerable resurgence. The symptoms are not always seen clearly by outsiders, however. The environmental conflicts which are frequent in the north are, in fact, power struggles about livelihoods, lifestyles, economic shares and legal rights. The movements for land claims are the same. Demands for sharing in resources decisions and revenues are neither idiosyncrasy nor ingratitude but demands for continued social and economic viability, i.e. survival, for people threatened by overwhelming population influxes drowning their numbers, dislocation of the traditional renewable resource economy, and inability to generate revenues needed to cope with change.

The purpose of this paper is to make a brief review of developments in northern Canada and the other northern countries - i.e. the USSR, Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Shetland, and Samiland (Lapland) in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Then some common elements are identified and some other points of interest. Each reader may draw his or her own conclusions, but it is suggested that at least some points emerge clearly.

THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN CANADA TODAY

Few Canadians, even northern Canadians, realise the full range and scope of the political proposals and experiments underway in northern Canada. As well, the sheer size of the area in which change is underway is immense. We are talking about portions of seven provinces as well as the two territories. The Indian- and Inuit-descended peoples of the Yukon, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador form considerably more than half the population of those areas. That adds up to more than half of Canada's land surface. Other areas farther south also have large or predominant Indian-descended populations. Overall, as much as 75% or more of Canada's area is or will soon be governed at the regional and local level by public bodies controlled by Indian, Metis and Inuit peoples. Many of these bodies will be specifically designed as aboriginal governments.

In Canada, political discussion does not usually centre on class structure and the "radical" analyses of society and economics so much a part of modern European conventions. Rather, Canada is the scene of the French- and English-speaking populations interacting, of regional balances and aspirations (including the "traditional demands" of some regions), of "executive federalism", and of various other forces which tend to limit the adventurousness of Canadian politics. Thus the "native movement" (i.e. the political movement of aboriginal Inuit, Indian and Metis peoples) of recent years has constituted a radical critique of Canadian history and society, and proposed some radical alternatives.

The alternatives put forward by aboriginal peoples groups across the country oppose many fundamental features of North American life. Aboriginal peoples see history in reverse from the "discovery and settlement" mentality of the white population. Their commitment to the natural environment and renewable resources is opposed to important assumptions of industrial society and the industrial exploitation of resources. Aboriginal customs of land and water use and communal sharing are at odds with Canada's European legal system built on private and exclusive ownership. Police and court systems have not seemed protectors as much as alien and often oppressive forces. "Consumerism" and acquisitive habits have not been traditional among most aboriginal groups. The strength of community and extended family ties and values in aboriginal society have been particularly

appreciated in recent years by Canadian society as a whole as it undergoes a period of social confusion.

The power of such a program of human values is immense, the more so because it stems not from a theoretical statement but from the experience of human societies with still inhabited homelands and a very long tradition. This is having an effect on Canadian politics in many parts of Canada, notably in western and northern regions, and nowhere more than in the Northwest Territories. As aboriginal individuals and families move in to cities forming sizable communities, especially in the western half of Canada, these traditions are carried with them and the influence spreads. There has been serious thought given to creation of a national political party centred on aboriginal concerns and open to others with shared interests. Indeed, many Canadians have been attracted by various features of the aboriginal "option". With the spread of regional aboriginal and aboriginal-dominated governments and other public authorities, there may be significant implications for Canada's public policies in the future. This applies not only to cultural and social directions, but also to other matters. The conventional economic and resources development mentality and ideas about economic enterprise in large areas of the country may be questioned and altered. Over the next decade this could all add up to a fundamental change in the make-up of Canada. It is fitting that the aboriginal people having been so long left out of the formation of the Canadian state should now prove a major dynamic element in the political future. It should also be welcomed by all Canadians, what is more, that a "Made in Canada" political ideology is at last emerging.

Until recently the traditional political, social and economic assumptions of Canada's largely English- and French-descended population pushed into all corners of the country. This has usually been outwardly peaceful - to the extent that the newspapers have not reported the effects or the impacts on aboriginal society. An exception was the 1869 rebellion of Metis at the site of present Winnipeg, a rebellion led by native peoples against new settlers trying to use the conventional values of Canada's eastern majority to take over the lands, resources and government of a hinterland area in the west. The rebellion led to creation of the province of Manitoba in 1870 with some promises of rights for the Metis, but quickly these were eroded and lost. The Northwest Rebellion of 1885 on the Great Plains again pitted Metis and Indians against the forces of

settlement and development from outside, forces pushing their communities out of traditional homelands.

Recent history in the Northwest Territories has been happier.

In 1979, Inuit, Dene (Indian) and Metis associations in the Northwest Territories, an area one-third of Canada's total size, decided that rather than continue to boycott territorial government politics, they would actively participate. Until then the NWT had been taking on the shape and nature of other frontier areas in Canada, i.e. more and more an area for white settlement and the domination of "mainstream Canadian" values and assumptions in politics as in other areas of life. In 1979 a strong group of Inuit, Dene and Metis took over the NWT Legislative Assembly together with a group of newly elected, younger, more flexible whites. That new Legislative Assembly met immediately and reversed the most important constitutional, aboriginal rights and political development policies of previous Legislative Assemblies. Since then a strong commitment to aboriginal rights and the development of government forms accommodating aboriginal needs have been the basic themes of the NWT government. In late 1983 another election confirmed and even reinforced this tendency.

However, the development of new governments in the NWT for the Inuit region named Nunavut and the Dene and Metis homeland often referred to as Denendeh may not be easy. Resistance among the non-native population in Denendeh and among government advisers and officials in Ottawa will be encountered for any major changes to public bodies reflecting special aboriginal interests. The new federal minister responsible for aboriginal and northern affairs, Mr. David Crombie, has already stated publicly (at the end of October, 1984) that he, for his part, is ready to accelerate work to establish Nunavut and other northern governments, and that he views this important work not only as "nation building", but even as "poetry".[2]

In the Northwest Territories, a committee of the Legislative Assembly in 1980 found that the people of the NWT, especially the aboriginal majority, did not accept or identify with the government system or the boundaries now existing. A plebiscite was held in April, 1982, and in the eastern half of the NWT the mostly Inuit population voted 4-1 for creation of Nunavut. Nunavut is an Inuit proposal for a new government sensitive to Inuit culture and interests, but open to all people living in the region. Since most of the people living there are Inuit, and a requirement of several years residence is proposed for voting, the Inuit would have security for some years in developing the territory according to their preferences. It is proposed that Nunavut would have the same powers as the present NWT (i.e. the powers of a Canadian province minus full ownership of natural resources) plus legislated Inuit language guarantees, a share of resources revenues and some powers in relation to ocean management.

In the western half of the NWT, the plebiscite vote was not so clear. The non-native public did not vote in significant numbers, but those who did were mostly opposed to creating new governments. Dene and Metis people largely supported change. The overall result for the whole NWT was 56% for division of the NWT into new territories.

Following the plebiscite, the NWT Legislative Assembly voted 19-0 for a policy of division of the NWT. New bodies were created to develop these new governments through a process of study, public discussion, community hearings and the development of consensus among racial and regional groups. For instance, the Nunavut Constitutional Forum is made up of elected members of the Legislative Assembly from Nunavut, the heads of the national Inuit organisation (Inuit Tapirisat) and of COPE, and the Nunavut claims leaders. The Western Constitutional Forum includes the Dene and Metis leaders plus elected members from the Legislative Assembly. These bodies are actively working now to create new governments, the first governments in Canadian constitutional history to be developed "from the grass roots". Although the Nunavut and Western forums are not immediately seeking the status of provinces, a status which the Constitution now requires to be agreed by a majority of the existing provinces and the national government, they assume that sometime in the future they will acquire such status. Unfortunately a dispute over the western boundary of Nunavut has complicated relations between the two forums.

In the development of their proposals so far, the Dene seem to have stressed the importance of a decentralised, locally controlled government system. The eastern Inuit of Nunavut, on the other hand, have decided that a more centralised Nunavut government would better serve their interests and provide more strength, limiting the role for regional bodies within Nunavut. This probably reflects the fact that Dene are conscious of being in a minority position numerically in their region, while Inuit form a large majority in Nunavut.

The Inuit of the western arctic coast of the NWT, the Inuvialuit, are represented by the oldest Inuit organisation, COPE, and have just completed a land claims agreement. This settlement includes a very strong economic package. The land selections in the agreement lie outside of communities, it should be noted, thus providing few opportunities (as were possible in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement) for ensured Inuit control of local government. Inuvialuit hope that with the resources and opportunities presented by this settlement, they may now secure their position in the area of most vigorous resources (oil and gas) development in the north. The development of a strong Western Arctic Regional Municipality (WARM) has been the major political development aim of Inuvialuit so that whether they ultimately find themselves in an eastern or western territory, key regional interests will be determined at the regional level.

The Inuit of the central arctic (Kitikmeot), Keewatin and Baffin areas, the Nunavut heartland, are negotiating land claims together, represented by a special body, TFN. Many sub-agreements have been signed along the way to a main agreement, but important matters remain unresolved between Inuit and government, e.g. the government's refusal to accept Inuit decision-making (as opposed to advisory) power on matters such as wildlife management.

Indian and Metis people in the Yukon have a more difficult situation. Unlike the NWT they are not a majority of the population, but one third. The Yukon has a reputation for a strong local political leadership opposed to aboriginal rights. Negotiations of land claims resulted in a draft settlement this year strongly criticised by other aboriginal groups throughout Canada; among other things the Yukon aboriginal peoples would give up their Indian status and rights, accept extinguishment of aboriginal title, and accept a "one-government" political system in the Yukon, i.e. the present Yukon government system which has not

traditionally favoured aboriginal interests. Some Yukon aboriginal opinion has now turned against the draft settlement, however, preventing it from being concluded. Presumably an eventual agreement will provide some further aboriginal guarantees may be provided in a final settlement. The many developments in aboriginal self-government and rights across Canada seem not to have figured largely in the thinking of Yukon Indian groups who, therefore, ignored certain important precedents in their negotiations. This may be a useful reminder of the value of keeping abreast of developments elsewhere.

In northern Quebec the Inuit and the Cree Indians concluded the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975 with the provincial (Quebec) and national governments. This agreement provides for cash compensation, a separate education system, protected lands, various environmental and economic guarantees and a system of local and regional government. Implementation has been too slow to avoid major problems, and the Cree and Inuit have spent much of their leadership's time in dispute with Quebec and Ottawa over these matters. This has used up valuable compensation funds and annual interest intended for economic and social development.

The Inuit of northern Quebec have recently set up a task force which is holding community meetings and conducting studies on an improved system of regional government. The Kativik Regional Government has not yet fully developed, but Inuit have been disappointed in some of its features, notably the uncertainty of budgets and the inability to tax resources development projects in the region to obtain sufficient and continuing revenue.

The federal government in 1984 enacted a new law to provide a system of land management and local Indian government for the Cree and Naskapi of northern Quebec. The Cree-Naskapi Act was drafted in accordance with provisions negotiated in the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the North-East Quebec Agreement. While the question of Indian self-government is unresolved at the national level in Canada, the Cree-Naskapi Act establishes local Indian government structures with powers comparable to those exercised by "advanced bands" under the present Indian Act. The importance of this precedent is the extent of control of the land vested in the Indian governments, unlike the situation of Indian bands under the Indian Act.

The Inuit of northern Labrador are beginning to negotiate land claims with the governments of Canada and Newfoundland. It is not yet clear what precise proposals they may make for regional and local government.

Many other proposals and working systems of aboriginal government in various stages of development are found in other parts of Canada; many more models are expected in the next years. One proposed by a government-appointed commission under Mr. Justice Patrick Hartt in Ontario suggested in 1977 that if the federal and provincial governments would cooperate in devolving their powers and resources to native peoples in northern areas, they could create viable governments solving the difficult social and economic conditions existing there, but that without such cooperation little would change.

In a law (Bill C-52) brought before Parliament in June, 1984, the Canadian government proposed a new system of Indian government providing powers to Indian bands on their lands, and providing a further list of powers to be negotiated by each band according to its own needs and circumstances. This is a follow-up to the landmark "Penner report" agreed by committee MPs of all parties in the House of Commons. The law was understood to be for Indian bands in the provinces, but various northern peoples have expressed interest. The draft has many paternalistic features and safeguards, and gives the government a great deal of power; nevertheless, it does permit a greater degree of self-government than other official proposals to date. Although this law was not debated because of the Canadian election intervening, all national political parties agree that some such law must be negotiated with Indian people and brought before Parliament in the near future.

Northern Canada is a patchwork of many homelands of peoples with very ancient traditions, and still often following a traditional economy based on renewable resources. This area is both politically and economically marginalised, lying aside from the main structures of Canadian society. However, perhaps over time its strength will grow from the very fact that something like "grass roots" government is developing from the various communities and cultures within this large expanse.

The Northwest Territories is far from being alone in the search for satisfactory political forms to accommodate aboriginal societies in northern Canada. But because it has

the most clearly defined aboriginal majority situation, an efficient, effective and well developed government directed to the interests of aboriginal peoples and with a seat at the constitutional talks, it does have a leadership role to play. It is hard to imagine that ever again in Canada's history will topics such as those now before the national constitutional conferences provide such a clear invitation to the NWT to speak out with authority and to make a contribution to the definition of Canada's future.

THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH

Despite conspicuous differences in political philosophy, the USSR, by far the world's largest northern state, has obvious importance for anyone interested in northern development. An industrialising giant, it is pushing into the frontier homelands of many northern peoples across a vast continent. Differences occasioned by the role of the Communist Party and central policymaking in Soviet political life make many comparisons difficult, but the structure of Soviet constitutions acknowledges the cultural identity and much of the regional character of the larger or more widespread populations, e.g. the Ukrainians, Georgians, Kazakhs, et al. The so-called "small peoples", that is the Inuit, Sami and other northern tribal peoples of Siberia and the north of European Russia, are in a somewhat different situation. Their small numbers, isolated locations and unconventional lifestyles, as well as the Soviet and earlier Russian obsessions with national security and territorial integrity, have made them objects for "Russification", assimilation and social remodelling. Such national policies are not, of course, unique to Soviet Russia.

The situation of the Soviet northern peoples is not reliably known, but there seems to be some variety. Some model communities are proudly shown off, and there are others where social breakdown, alcoholism, etc. are all too evident. The situation of Inuit and Sami is a subject of great concern to Inuit in North America and Sami in Scandinavia, but contact is not encouraged by the USSR. While industrialisation, pollution (e.g. of rivers) and socio-political state theory have all menaced traditional societies, other forces such as benign neglect and limited state budgets may have worked in the opposite direction. In some areas, apparently, food needs have occasioned a revival in traditional lifeways in order to encourage the young into

e.g. reindeer herding, and traditions have been actively encouraged in order to reinforce indigenous food production. The earlier emphasis on education and teaching of tribal languages, Lenin's first move of winning the confidence of remote peoples in a program of eventual Russification, meant that traditional cultures were buoyed in at least some aspects. Institutes with much knowledge of northern traditions and the social ways of northern peoples grew up in centres like Leningrad. Lenin placed a very high priority on Siberian development, and an active policy towards the north brought knowledge of the northern peoples as collective entities into general Soviet awareness and policy, often for the first time.

On the other hand, the objectives were assimilationist. With the exception of Inuit and Sami whose homelands in Soviet border areas and previous contact with non-Soviet kin made them objects of relocation and concern, Soviet northern peoples have probably been not more dislocated than other Soviet citizens, nor more subject to industrial development pressures than other northern peoples. Indeed, traditional northern cultures have received some celebrity in the USSR, albeit in a society as smugly sophisticated, urban and centralised as any other.

The first chapter of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution with its passionate and remarkable discourse on Russia's backwardness may reveal another undercurrent in Soviet policy. The desire for modernisation warring with rural intransigence, evident in Russian history at least since Peter I, the Great, is a basic theme in the life of the Soviet peoples. The legendary stubbornness and unchanging nature of rural life in the USSR has long been a main element of Russian literature, but also has resulted in drastic measures by successive governments anxious to carry out their programs. The major difference between Soviet northern development and that in Canada is the Soviet determination to develop the north for domestic goals of self-sufficiency, rather than according to the demand for raw materials in international markets. Increasingly, however, the Soviets are taking an interest in export potential.

Industrial development and population influxes have doubtless weighed heavily on northern peoples. Newcomers in the north are often avid in fishing and hunting in a country where food production and distribution remains a problem, thereby putting pressure on northern peoples' traditional

resources. Soviet policy, like Canada's, seems increasingly to favour fly-in, fly-out, work forces rather than permanent settlement in the more remote areas. Also, new awareness of pollution costs, plus a northern science capability advanced well beyond present Western levels, may also be factors for change and a more "scientific" northern management process.

A political structure of major interest is the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, an area about the size of the Northwest Territories with perhaps a million people. This would be an interesting area of study. Language and education policies and systems, renewable resource management and organisation, food production more specifically, traditional and new social forms, traditions retained in legal and administrative practice, environmental policies, political participation and decision-making balances between "new" northerners and the Yakuts and other traditional peoples, and the actual division of decision-making powers between central and local Party and administrative authorities would be subjects for examination. Yakutisation in some areas and Russification in others have clearly gone far, although measures of independent development are inherently difficult of comparison between liberal democracies like Canada and socialist countries. While the conclusion may not be very relevant to the other societies to be discussed below, there is little doubt that the USSR's northern peoples have wider opportunities for political participation, even in some cases as traditional collective entities, than ever before. On the other hand, any talk of "land claims" would be considered both reactionary and dangerous to "proletarian democracy".

Soviet authorities have made clear that internationalising arctic issues is contrary to their state policy, and that the native political movements of Canada are regarded as unpleasantly radical (for attacking industrial and resources projects as much as for their ethno-centric character).[3] On the other hand, Canada-USSR cooperation agreements hold out some hope for information and cultural exchange. In areas where national prestige or national priorities may be served the Soviets have, naturally, shown less reluctance to share northern experience. In general, then, mixed motives and even more mixed effects are as clear in Soviet northern policy as in other countries.

The United States' arctic, Alaska, a former Russian colony, was sold to the Americans in the year Canada became

a distinct modern state, 1867. The Alaska boundary, like that of Maine, anomalously carves into Canadian territory because Britain found it more convenient to accommodate American demands than risk displeasure while negotiating our territory. Alaska today is a busy state. The main city, Anchorage, sits in a basin of spectacular mountains, a modern attractive city of over 200,000, well-supplied with bookshops and top restaurants, modern hotels and computer centres, and is the unlikely meeting place of worlds, mid-way between America, Europe and the booming Far East. The flight crews and accents of all nations at any hour of day or night in the downtown hotels are a reminder that the US arctic is no longer peripheral. Yet Alaska's developmental and political issues are familiar to northern Canadians. Pitched battles over native subsistence rights, ethnicity as a criterion in public services, alcohol abuse and environmental protection are standard. The bigger question looming is what will happen to public services and spin-off employment as oil revenues level off and then decline in the next years. The Americans, untroubled by the welfare state commitments of Canada and the northern European countries, are more accepting of abrupt change in availability of services. Whatever we may think of the price paid thereby, this is a major difference between our political cultures.

Planning in general is another important difference. A major new book edited by Westermeyer and Shusterich, United States Arctic Interests: The 1980s and 1990s,[4] contains essays which mostly take for granted that planning, like AIDS, is to be dreaded and avoided. While Canadians would generally complain that northern planning is not comprehensive enough, our high levels of planning and state control would appall most Americans. It is unlikely that the military in Alaska is so ingenuously unplanned, of course, but the Alaska newspapers contain cheery articles by military base spokesmen on how the local fighting forces are making ends meet with home-made simplicity. The biggest planners in Alaska are the large oil and other resources interests. Now some of the native groups, most notably the North Slope Borough and the Inuit collectively-owned corporations in that area, have developed their own planning capacities in response. The coastal zone management work of the North Slope has been a state-of-the-art project which would be usefully studied by northern peoples (and governments) elsewhere.

If Alaska has affluent and southern-style cities, Anchorage and Fairbanks, at its centre, native Alaska, or "bush Alaska" as it is called locally, is another world. In the central interior the Dene communities stretch along the great rivers. Along the Panhandle are the Haida and Tlinkit peoples. The south coast has Inuit-related peoples. The Aleuts in the islands named for them stretch out across the Pacific. The Yupik and Inupiat, the two main Inuit groups, inhabit the south-west coast and the north and north-west coasts respectively. The tremendous profits of some of the native corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 contrast with others which have been failures. The rich community improvements of a town like the Inupiat centre Barrow are unmatched by many villages where conditions remain poor. The unequal results of ANCSA and the fear of the loss of land in 1991 when the major protections of ANCSA lapse have created great anxiety among native people, an anxiety now focussed on Canadian judge Tom Berger's Alaska Native Review Commission established by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) in 1983. The Commission, holding hearings in the villages around Alaska, with additional workshops on special themes, is drawing a great deal of interest and hope. Judge Berger, meanwhile, seeks to produce a report which examines not only the Alaska situation but is relevant to the situation of other circumpolar peoples and aboriginal peoples everywhere. He has already included NWT and other Canadian aboriginal and governmental expertise in his hearings and research, as well as experience from other northern countries. The ICC expects to publicise his report worldwide through the United Nations.

The ICC has a special role for Alaskan natives. In an essay in Westermeyer's book the ICC Alaskan vice-president, Jimmy Stotts, outlines its function. Not only is ICC to encourage the arctic-wide defense and promotion of the aboriginal food economy, but to provide Alaska natives with the means to escape the delays and obstacles of normal multi-level bureaucratic and political process, to take their case directly to any level of public attention, and to work directly with national governments on arctic policy. The reason for this last point is clear from other essays in Westermeyer's book: unlike Canada where Inuit are, perhaps reluctantly, included in arctic planning today, American arctic specialists remain unconvinced of the importance of native people in their large schemes. Indeed, in the usual American lists of arctic priorities military security comes

at the top, and while birds and fish may be mentioned below, homo sapiens usually is not.

Nevertheless, Alaska is an American state like no other. The native people are not the only ones in Alaska concerned with the living resources, and the political impact is not theirs alone. As Westermeyer writes in his introductory chapter, "Gissberg has noted that 'the primary impetus for [Alaska] statehood was dissatisfaction over the control of local fisheries harvests by outside managers in Washington, DC' and that 'statehood was designed to help Alaska provide for itself by localizing resource management decisions and maximizing the instate benefits of harvest activities conducted in Alaska.'"

The political action now in native Alaska centres on the future of self-government and control of the traditional lands and homelands. This is essentially a three-cornered debate, and Berger's commission will presumably be a major factor in sorting it out. There are the native profit corporations, sometimes successful and sometimes not, but often accused of creaming off the best local native talents and even being a Trojan horse bringing the homogenising forces of American enterprise and culture into the native world. At the same time these bodies have enabled native Alaskans to develop their leadership, management and political skills and to participate as equals in Alaskan and American society, as individuals and as representatives of their peoples.

Secondly, there are the traditional and Indian Reorganisation Act (IRA) tribal governments with considerable, but in Alaska largely unused, potential for native self-government. Inuit spokesmen at a recent Berger workshop in Anchorage strongly denied that these were ethnically exclusive, pointing out that outsiders who embraced local values and lived in the communities were eligible for membership. There is now a considerable movement in native Alaska for the development of these governments and for their acquisition of the lands vested in the ANCSA corporations. A principal question which does not yet seem to have been fully addressed is whether the village or a larger regional grouping is most effective as a political unit. The village has been the usual form of Alaska native entity for a long time, and concepts of village "home rule" are being seriously considered by Berger's commission and others. But a government requires a mix of people, breadth and revenue large enough to function

effectively over more than community services. Some groups are looking at joining their villages in e.g. a Yupik Nation. These governments would be federally chartered and federally protected, as is the case with Canada's Indian band governments.

Another school of thought exemplified by the present North Slope Borough supports state-chartered jurisdictions. These, argue North Slope Borough advisers, have the prospect of wider powers and state revenues, and even if they do not contain ultimate guarantees for separate native identity, one has to learn to live and work with one's neighbours who will, given lucrative development, move into the area. Certainly the North Slope people have made good use of the borough model, which they themselves designed under Alaska's permissive system of chartering: i.e. that a borough can exercise what powers it wants provided these are not specifically exercised by state or federal governments. The Prudhoe Bay revenues have fuelled the borough's expansive and expensive programs of social and capital improvement, job creation, education and training, and environmental management. The borough is more than 88,000 square miles in size but with only some 5000 Inupiat and an equal number of transient workers. Now some North Slope leaders are exploring other options which might further secure Inupiat revenues, lands and cultural identity. The search may not be easy, but one may guess that the aggressive, adaptable and strongly tradition-centred Inupiat will hold their own in virtually any system. One of the most exciting frontier stories of the 20th century must be the way the North Slope leadership developed, fought for, defended and are now implementing their environmental and planning systems in the face of full opposition from the international oil industry and blockages at every level of government.

Meanwhile, Alaska natives are looking at possibilities such as amendment of the US constitution, new federal legislation in respect of Alaska lands and native self-government, and even Canadian models such as the Nunavut and Western Constitutional Forums for seeking consensus on new political structures.

American legal and policy traditions for native law[5] differ from Canadian ones, but an important element in Alaska concerns customary law and tribal courts. Berger's hearings have included various American native and non-native experts to discuss these customary law systems, and they report that a traditional court for settling

disputes or a fully elaborated system such as the Navaho have can be set up easily enough. With native peoples in the NWT and elsewhere in Canada now considering such possibilities, study of these American cases would be useful.

In Alaska there is ferment and variety, and conditions and choices of native peoples are essentially the same as in northern Canada. Regardless of some important Canada-US differences of political convention, northern Canadian native peoples considering their own options would find more here of interest than in any other jurisdiction. The fact that Dene and Inuit are the major Alaska native populations should also be noted.

If to Canada's west is the unplanned American frontier, to our east in Greenland is a society even more planned and organised than the NWT. The reorganisation of the scattered Greenland Inuit population into "growth centres" to service an industrialised fishery proved a mixed blessing. While it made for efficient public services and the full range of education and social assistance programs to Inuit, it shook up and even shattered the traditional culture, replacing it with a Danish lifestyle which, unsurprisingly, requires Danes and Danish-trained staff to manage. Social problems created by the dislocation, or more directly by the presence of a largely male, largely transient Danish population, ran out of control. This cultural shock and all-pervasive Danish influence led to younger, educated Greenlanders founding a nationalist political movement which has now led Greenland through the winning of home rule, three elections since self-government and withdrawal from the European economic system.

With the same size of population as the NWT, Greenland is now facing a very special challenge. Most of its economy including shipping, fishing, retail stores, hotels, crafts trade, post office, etc. has been controlled in one large state corporation, the KGH (Royal Greenland Trade Department). Although the KGH has done well in hiring mostly Greenlanders (i.e. Inuit and Inuit-descended mixed blood people), the top management and technical levels have been strongly dominated by Danes. Now the KGH is to be broken up into units managed and manageable by Greenlanders and their communities, with co-ops and other forms of management structure being explored so that the economy will continue truly to serve the collective interests of the people of Greenland.

The home rule arrangement in Greenland is very significant, but it has become common for Canadian visitors listening to the modest and critical views of young Greenlanders to slight this as insufficient and deceptive. While such pride among Canadians is understandable, it is misleading. Greenland has a great deal of power over virtually every area of public life with only some few matters like defence, foreign affairs and currency reserved to Copenhagen; furthermore, Greenland can negotiate further transfers as administrative and financial capacity permit. The Inuit language is the official and main language of Greenland and is taught in the schools, as Danish also continues to be - i.e. Greenland is essentially bilingual. All laws and public documents are available in Inuktitut and in Danish. Some observers have complained that Greenland's great task to make Inuktitut official is draining educated Inuit manpower away from other important subject areas.

The resources administration in Greenland provides both Greenland and Denmark with a veto on policy and projects, on- and off-shore. In other words, no project can go ahead until Greenland has accepted or defined the conditions, and some major projects (e.g. south Greenland uranium) have been cancelled. The Greenland government has forbidden oil drilling offshore, but now an onshore oil exploration program is beginning in Jameson Land in east Greenland. The hazards of tanker movement in and out of Scoresby Sund, a fertile open water area like Lancaster Sound, have made this latter project highly controversial, but over local objections the Greenland government is pursuing it in search of national revenue. (A new company comprising Greenland government and an Alaska North Slope Inuit ANCSA corporation will carry out work for Atlantic Richfield on this project.) At the time when (and if) non-renewable resource revenues become large a negotiation of revenue sharing between Greenland and Denmark will take place, but any revenues meanwhile are applied against the large annual Danish block grant to Greenland's government. Both the surface and sub-surface in Greenland are publicly owned, and that public is the whole Danish kingdom. However, the Home Rule Act acknowledges "some fundamental rights" of Greenlanders as long as these are compatible with national unity, and some Greenland politicians are seeking to translate this into a more concrete title to land and resources. This was, however, flatly rejected by the social democratic Danish prime minister under whom home rule was negotiated, and has been again rejected by his conservative successor.

Resources and environment policy are the major sensitivities in Greenland politics. A labour permit system defines who is a Greenlander by a birth criterion (child of one parent born in Greenland) and gives job preference accordingly. This law is administered loosely to date, but could be a very strong lever for full Inuitisation. That, plus the always overloaded state-controlled housing market, provides Greenland Inuit with a control on future development and the security of their national culture. The people of Greenland wish never to relive the influx of foreign workers and experts who reshaped the country and reorganised the society in their own image in the 1950s and 1960s. For that reason various resource deposits in or near populated areas are less likely to be developed than ones more remote.

The place of the Davis Strait fishery as Greenland's main economic base and the anxiety about foreign fishing was the central element in Greenland's campaign to quit the European economic system. More general fears of industrial development and its demand for raw materials were another element. When a superb agreement had been negotiated in Bruxelles, however, so fierce was Greenland home opinion against any residual rights for foreign fishermen that a political and constitutional crisis, new elections and a new coalition government resulted, all in spring, 1984. It is this same extreme sensitivity which fuels Greenland concerns about any drilling or tanker traffic in Lancaster Sound and Davis Strait.

Opposition to nuclear weapons and the suspicion that US military bases in Greenland play a role in forward strategies for a NATO nuclear strike capability have led to Greenland government calls for an arctic nuclear-free zone. While this is viewed by some in Canada as "radical", the fact that it is a current issue among Western European politicians of all ages, and ruminated about aloud by Canada's national party leaders themselves, would seem to make it quite unexceptional. Whether the subject becomes one used for partisan advantage on the nationalist issue in Greenland is another matter, of course.

During the home rule negotiations, carried on in a commission composed of half Danish MPs from all major parties and the other half being Greenland's two MPs and five members of the Greenland elected council, public discussion of the basic issues was encouraged. A special information and communication function was part of the

commission's work. This open discussion led directly to the formation of the Greenland political parties. While all parties are strongly and proudly Greenlandic and Inuit, their major differences are over future relations with Denmark (i.e. more or less independence) and degrees of state socialism. The major opposition to home rule came from the far Left parties who wanted more sovereignty, and the municipalities who wanted to preserve their own accustomed clout vis-à-vis a pleasantly remote and benign Danish "colonial" power. Both tendencies were strongly outvoted in the plebiscite on the home rule plan and now this Left participates enthusiastically in all aspects of Greenland public life, holding two cabinet posts. Home rule is not constitutionally entrenched, theoretically amendable by the Copenhagen parliament unilaterally (however unlikely that might be). For this reason, constitutional guarantees of Greenland's autonomy as a counter to outright separation are being considered by some few forward thinkers. The Greenland home rule plan was modelled on the earlier home rule accorded the Faroe Islands in 1948.

Greenland now presents two faces to the world. An active supporter and promoter of native rights and interests internationally, the ICC provides an outlet for the vigour and dynamism of young educated Greenland Inuit organised into many functional organisations representing the interests of women, labour, hunters and trappers, fishermen, language specialists, students, etc. In a sense the ICC serves as the foreign relations arm of Greenland because the home rule laws specifically deny Greenland such a role itself. (However, the Home Rule Act specifies that Greenland has international interests and may be assured Danish government support and cooperation in pursuing these.) Yet while at times Greenland presents itself as a minority people asserting local native rights, the Greenland government is always eager to assert its claim to the full perquisites and dignities of a full and free government. At times the imperatives of government-to-government relations may take precedence over Inuit-to-Inuit relations, a source of periodic annoyance and disappointment to Inuit elsewhere. As Greenland seeks its way in the world, newly independent of the European Economic Community, albeit with a substantial continuation agreement, both the fishing communities of the North Atlantic outside the EEC sharing the Dano-Norwegian language (i.e. Norway, Iceland, the Faroes), and the Inuit territories located in the rich North American economies of Canada and the USA will offer attractions.

East of Greenland in the North Atlantic lie three jurisdictions which are European but nevertheless have the same characteristics as the aboriginal societies discussed. Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Shetland were all settled more than a thousand years ago by Norwegian "vikings". Iceland and the Faroe Islands were part of Norway's medieval empire along with Greenland. (Greenland, however casually, included Canada as an extension, presumably, but this has never apparently been noted.) These areas were annexed by Denmark when Norway collapsed and fell under Danish rule in the 14th century. When Denmark was divested of Norway by the Allies after the defeat of Napoleon, these Atlantic islands were forgotten and so remained with Denmark. Shetland and Orkney loom large in old Norwegian lore too, but have been uneasily appended to Scotland since early times.

Iceland had no aboriginal people, although the first Norwegians to arrive found some few Irish hermit monks who departed quickly. The settlement and development of law and government in Iceland are fully recorded by the world's most literary people in whose sagas are also recorded the first known white visits to North America, specifically to Baffin, Labrador and Newfoundland. The early economy was the usual viking mix of sheep-raising and fishing, with seafaring, trading and raiding thrown in. Today Iceland continues to centre its economic life on sheep and fish, with a travel agency on every block and an international airline as an important earner of foreign exchange.

The political situation was resolved in 1944 when Iceland fully and finally proclaimed its independence from Denmark while occupied by the Americans and with Denmark under Nazi occupation. This fact partly accounts for Danish sensitivity to North American interests in Greenland today, it should be noted, the more so since a post-war memo was published revealing US consideration of buying or otherwise taking over Greenland from Denmark. Iceland was headed for independence in any case, but Denmark would have liked to do it by the book. Although fully independent, Iceland has had qualities of political minority status thanks to its disputed fishing claims with powerful European neighbours. The cod wars with Britain and other related disputes have seen Icelanders fighting wholeheartedly for preservation of their renewable resource economy and precarious but affluent lifestyle.

The other great national issue is the continuing presence of American troops at the NATO base, Keflavik, near the capital, Reykjavik. Iceland has passed laws limiting the numbers and wanderings of these personnel, but it is bizarre to sit in fine seafood restaurants in the capital and hear American voices on the radio advising servicemen how to benefit from service education plans and how to avoid running afoul of the military police. Although the American numbers are small compared to the Icelandic population of some 215,000, protection of the social and cultural fabric, as much as of the living environment, are Icelandic priorities. As with the other Atlantic islands, protection of the renewable resource environment has been elevated to a central focus of political life. So absolute is the people's sensitivity that everything from billboards to guardrails at scenic waterfall gorges, not to mention industrial effluents, and even dogs (which are banned from towns), are lacking. Iceland is perhaps the most environmentally sensitive country on earth. Yet it is a fully modern, active and sophisticated society, proud of its ancient culture, with bus-drivers reciting saga passages in Old Norse to emphasise points. Many popular sweater designs, like some Icelandic place-names, reflect contact with Inuit in Greenland (and Canada?) during the period when Icelandic Norwegians were settled there in the Middle Ages. Iceland like the other Nordic countries has one of the highest standards of living on earth, and also has the oldest republican, egalitarian, women's rights and social sharing traditions of any European country, dating from c. 900 AD. Medieval history is full of the fussings of European bishops and kings who felt that Iceland's independent anti-feudal and anti-monarchic existence was an affront.

The Faroes, meaning "sheep islands", also retain the Old Norse language in a distinctive local dialect. A disproportionate number of Denmark's writers and poets are Faroese, just as viking kings in Norway and Denmark liked to have an Icelandic poet in their retinue. With the same population numbers as the NWT, the Faroes, like Iceland, had no aboriginal people predating them. Renewable resources sheep and fish) with many value-added commercial adaptations are virtually the sole activities in addition to the related and necessary shipping. Environmental protection, disdain for European systems and industrialisation, and a strong nationalist movement are local hallmarks. The Faroese have managed their home rule so effectively that they have considerably reduced the bureaucratic load and Danes play

little or no part in local affairs. The demand for home rule was so intense that Denmark had to rush through legislation with no thought to the lengthy process required for amending the Constitution. The islanders had sought British consent for independence during the wartime occupation, but the British, more cautious than the Americans, said that this was a matter between the Faroes and Denmark for resolution after the war.

Shetland, similar in most ways to Iceland and the Faroes, long held onto a distinct dialect with Old Norse elements, but this has now finally fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, the fiercely independent population has made clear in recent years that should Scottish independence succeed, they would opt out and prefer a home rule arrangement with London. Sheep and fish, with a world-famous wool fashion industry like Iceland and the Faroes, sustain the local population. The main new element has been the development of North Sea oil and the Shetlanders' demands for major shares and their insistence that the population and facilities be "quarantined" so as not to disrupt local social culture or the natural environment. Despite much work at the planning stage the range and variety of environmental degradation has not been meagre, and however positive local attitudes before various projects began, surveys afterwards repeatedly show a souring. The reorganisation report of 1969 on Scotland's local government fortunately recognised that despite the small population, history and culture required that Shetland, Orkney, and the Western Isles each have a distinct government, the purpose of reform having been to bring people closer to their local government. This was implemented. By use of special and, for a non-federal state like Britain, rather novel local management and government régimes, significant control for the Shetlanders has been provided over the key oil port area and onshore facilities for the North Sea development, and also enabled them to share in revenues for local benefit. Observers report that Shetland has done well in coping with the oil boom, and speculate that this is because the people are self-confident through accustomed exercise of considerable local government and planning authority. The Shetland case is one of considerable interest for northern Canadians and has been the subject of some comparative study already. A sentence from Nelson and Jessen's book is very to the point[6]:

> Similarities among the Shetlands, the North Slope Borough, and the Canadian Beaufort region include:

isolation; low population; little urbanization; large dependence on fish and other renewable resources; human occupancy for thousands of years; distinctive regional ethnic characteristics in the population; a homeland view among the residents; a wilderness or wildland view among outsiders; and a succession of whaling, mining, and other invasions of the "boom and bust" type, culminating in the recent large-scale quest for petroleum.

The Sami of Norway, Sweden and Finland, or Lapps as they are usually known in Canada, have important multi-national rights in respect of reindeer and, in the past, for other purposes as well. In the central area of Samiland, an arctic plateau where the Sami and their reindeer economy still predominate, the herds move back and forth seasonally, crossing borders. The international boundaries in the area were drawn in the 18th century with the boundary commission taking the land use of Sami families as data for the new boundaries. Such cross-border arrangements proved upsetting to later nationalist thinking. Sami rights, set in the Lappacodicilen, a treaty codicil similar in importance to Canada's 1763 Royal Proclamation, Indian treaties and Jay Treaty rolled into one, have been steadily eroded since. Negotiations between Sweden and Norway on reindeer-related boundary issues are now commencing and may prove important. Meanwhile, the Nordic Council which brings together Norway, Sweden and Finland (as well as Iceland and Denmark) in joint consultations and many projects sponsors the Nordic Sami Council and funds various multi-lateral Sami projects including the Sami Institute in Kautokeino. Sami observers attend Nordic Council meetings, while Greenland and the Faroes attend as associate members. (A Danish proposal to seat the Sami as well resulted in quick and negative Scandinavian reactions.) The Sami play a very active part in the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) whose headquarters are in Ottawa and whose first and third (and present) presidents have been Canadian native leaders. The Sami have informal working relations with the ICC and these may be upgraded and formalised in the near future. Norway's government has taken a lead in providing moral and financial support to international aboriginal work through the WCIP and the outstanding citizens' group, the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).

Sami have been long known in Europe, even Roman writers speculating in amusing confusion on the significance and

precise nature of the Sami-invented activity of skiing. But it has been very difficult for some Scandinavians to accept that these white-skinned people occupying the more northerly lands from earliest time are "aboriginal". While the Nordic countries have proven remarkably successful in promoting political and economic equality in all their regions, pluralism has not been so easy, the countries in question being very ancient and relatively homogeneous. While this is now changing somewhat, cultural distinctiveness seems to fly in the face of the cherished notions of equality and democratisation which still fire Nordic progressive politics. However, in Norway a Sami Rights Committee and a parallel Sami Culture Committee are breaking new ground, and are pulling along official opinion in Sweden and Finland as well.

The first report of the Sami Rights Committee[7], published in June, 1984, contains a major chapter - now being translated into English - surveying, analysing, updating, and developing world aboriginal rights law and its implications. That chapter concludes that international law and practice bind progressive states like Canada and Norway to protect and provide for the homelands and culture of aboriginal peoples, the term "culture" embracing the land and resources required by those peoples to carry on their livelihoods and sustain their communities. Further reports will deal with the Norwegian Crown's uncertain title to the Sami heartland in Finnmark, resources and water rights, including coastal resources, and such rights throughout Norway. These matters have not only national implications but affect the Sami daily in their northern homelands where roads, hydro-electric projects, and other forms of development are encroaching on their traditional livelihoods and the viability of the society built around these. The confrontation of 1979-82 over construction of a hydro dam on Norway's Alta River made native rights and environmental issues a national and nationally wrenching experience. All sides, embittered, are anxious to avoid a repeat.

The first Sami Rights Committee report also proposes an amendment to the national constitution committing the government to protection of Sami special status, language and culture; 4-yearly reviews of Sami policy and its implementation by means of debates in Parliament; local and regional Sami councils to relate to local and regional authorities; a national elected Sami parliament to advise Parliament and the government on Sami policy; and a Sami Act to secure all these provisions in law. These matters are

controversial in a country where neither federal nor culturally plural traditions exist. Even in the Sami northland many Sami, grateful for the enhanced living standards brought by decades of a social democratic party identified with local party bosses, have formed an organisation opposing Sami rights! These people fear that special status will invite a backlash from other Norwegians. However, by mobilising hitherto unproclaimed Sami, especially in the coastal villages and towns, this organisation, SLF, may have quite other ultimate results than those initially intended. The Sami Culture Committee report, expected any day, may be considerably more assertive than the Sami Rights Committee report, prescribing the text of a national law to protect and promote Sami language and urging further political developments to secure Sami culture on the widest possible basis.

The Sami parliament or Sameting would initially only have advisory powers, although it would be the formal spokesman of Sami interests vis-à-vis the government and national parliament. It was difficult to get any agreement on this proposal in the committee because of the preponderant membership of non-Samis including some strong vested interests from northern Norway. However, Sami leaders are hopeful that the second report and the Sami Culture Committee report may urge a stronger role. Certainly the Sami leadership wants a body with decision-making powers, and the Sami Rights Committee chairman recently hinted that it might gain some powers respecting territorial and resources matters in a large area of northern Norway, depending on the final contents of the second report. And as the committee chairman points out, the Sameting will be able to recommend that its powers and functions be expanded once it is created. The subject of Sami rights and policy towards Sami will be a live one in Norway for some years to come, given the timetable of reports, elections. etc. It may be said that in a country where native rights are not a subject with the years of public debate and attention they have received in Canada, the Sami Rights Committee work is creating a political schedule to keep up momentum and discussion, and to ensure that the country cannot easily forget the Sami.

Norway, long a leader in international human rights work, has produced a very fine report, even if domestic audiences are the main obstacles to its success. Sweden and Finland have both upgraded their own Sami rights efforts in order to keep up with the Norwegian momentum. The small Finnish Sami

population, bottled into a limited northern area and divided by traditional cultures, disposes of a Sami advisory parliament. This body has such limited powers that even its leading members question its value. In Sweden many running battles between forest and other interests with the Sami, and a lost multi-year court case have been discouraging, but recent legislation promises to give greater recognition to Sami resources development interests. Sweden's accounting to international bodies for its good works in respect of Sami contains a pride more reminiscent of an old imperial Sweden than a modern social democracy. As some Swedish Sami have complained, it would be easier to deal with non-ideological multi-national companies than an ideology-driven social democratic government full of right answers which may be nonetheless wrong for Sami. An exception to Nordic discomfort with pluralism may be Danish policy, but Greenland is far away, with an alien climate and language and race; only a clown would suggest that the Inuit Greenlanders and homogeneous Danish populations were "one people".

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Along the way a few points of special interest have been highlighted in our various circumpolar cases. But there are also some quite general conclusions which may be drawn. Among the circumpolar peoples, with no apparent difference between those who are aboriginal and those who are European, we find

- small and distinctive cultures occupying relatively large and "undeveloped" northern areas;

- struggles by these societies to protect their social structures and livelihoods from the disruption of large population influxes;

- legal and political conflicts between the claims to land and resources, and their use and benefit, of northern peoples and the governmental and industrial development interests which would exploit these for southern use;

- the celebration and retention of distinct languages and cultures;

- condescension in southern decision and opinion centres, whether Moscow, Copenhagen or Toronto,

towards the demands of northerners for strengthening and continuation of their distinct lifestyles;

- stable societies based now as traditionally on the harvesting of renewable resources;

- the utility and success of locally manageable and locally managed commercial, industrial or public bodies for development;

- the frequency and bitterness of environmental protection battles;

- a general antipathy to industrialisation;

- the emphasis on resources development questions both on- and off-shore as an essential element of political conflict and aspirations;

- demands for greater legal rights to lands and resources and for more self-governing powers and stronger representative institutions by northern peoples; and

- an ultimate willingness to accept political accommodations within existing state structures, with the potential these have to offer, rather than pursue separation.

Viewed in this context, Canadian experience is merely one part of a much larger phenomenon crossing many cultures and borders, languages and races. If we can look at some of the questions in this unfamiliar context, we may be less blinded by our own prejudices. But first we should look at this list again to make sure we know what we mean.

Small and distinctive cultures occupying relatively large and "undeveloped" northern areas.

By European standards, even Iceland and Shetland are scarcely inhabited. Northern areas, partly due to harshness of climate and availability of food resources, are not heavily populated. Yet northern peoples are not a few eccentrics living on a mountain somewhere to get away from it all; rather they are cohesive societies with long-established traditions, distinct from their neighbours who in any event are quite far away. Their form of local

adaptation may be the most intensive that a sustainable resource base allows. The classic example is early medieval Greenland when the Norse settled there in a time of benign climate. A study of the fjords and ruins reveals that every patch of meadow where the Norse could graze their domestic animals had a farm on it, yet one does not think of the Greenland Norse as a major population.

Struggles by these societies to protect their social structures and livelihoods from the disruption of large population influxes.

Everyone has seen films where American rocket bases or industrial firms arrive in tiny remote Scottish villages, the rest of the plot being a predictable cliché. But in the movies the villagers usually win. In real life the story is usually different. Influxes of outsiders, often temporary workers, have a major impact and can create total social change and disruption - e.g. Greenland's modernisation by Danes, the Dene and Inuit homelands of the NWT, and Iceland's occupation by the US and post-war base, subject of a mawkish Nobel-prize winning novel, The Atom Station by Halldor Laxness. The social problems of family violence, alcoholism, disease, etc. are far from amusing and can destroy whole populations when they persist, e.g. the "disappearance" of whole tribes of Indian people in southern Canada who were, nevertheless, not engaged in warfare. The Economist speculated that the British forces remaining in the Falklands would upset more applecarts than Argentina's attack would have accomplished.

Legal and political conflicts between the claims to land and resources, and their use and benefit, of northern peoples and the governmental and industrial development interests which would exploit these for southern use.

In every area we have mentioned the lands, waters and resources of ancient homelands are being claimed by outside interests, including national governments, who wish to use them for purposes which the local people don't want. With governments one day trying to grab lands and resources in areas where their interest has been otherwise minimal, and then the next resorting to dusty theories of the divine right of states to so deny local populations the long-standing uses and benefits of these resources, creates problems. For one thing, national governments and their law codes often have little credibility in northern areas. More importantly, people see that the government is not their

government, and so they have to look to the development of new levels of political authority and new legal guarantees. In that very fundamental sense, all the northern peoples are involved in "constitutional" struggles.

The celebration and retention of distinct languages and cultures.

A lot of talk in Canada has minimised the importance of northern native languages. Yet the vitality of forms of indigenous expression is central to a people. In the northern world languages spoken by small groups of people have not only continued, but have provided rich literatures, song and oral traditions. At the same time, all these societies have matter-of-factly accepted bilingualism. Recognition that a language more widely spoken than one's own may be useful does not deny the importance of speaking one's own home language. An interesting case is Greenland where Inuktitut and Danish are spoken, but where more and more young Greenlanders are also learning English which is more useful in the outside world than Danish. Unfortunately the Anglo-Saxon and Continental French disdain for second languages spilled over into their North American colonies and Canadian attitudes are not as developed on language issues as they should be. (This year in Norway a sour President Mitterrand told his press conference that Norwegians really should learn to speak French.) Northern languages are viable, although rebuilding them after they have been eroded may take some time and money. In all areas the people affected have taken on the work themselves, with funds they have negotiated through claims or through local governments they have come to dominate; seldom have they had encouragement from the national state or its majority populations, however. The history and development of Greenland's Inuktitut language and literature, and now its entrenchment as the official language of a modern nation, are worth consideration. The Inupiat on the Alaska North Slope have also rebuilt and are now reteaching and renewing their language through the school system and through courses open to anyone. Languages convey cultural values and much more than simple communication, of course. Study is proceeding in some circumpolar areas on how indigenous languages like Sami and Inuktitut carry many distinctions and usages for familiar environmental matters unknown to imported languages like Norwegian or English, and what use this may be in modern environmental management.

Condescension in southern decision and opinion centres, whether Moscow, Copenhagen, or Toronto, towards the demands of northerners for strengthening and continuation of their distinct lifestyles.

Much of the amusement and patronising air of capitals towards northern areas is simply an attitude of the city towards rural life of which "the far north" is considered the extreme. Most Canadian farmers would have been glad to have as much attention from the Trudeau government as Inuit and Dene received. When The New Yorker cartoons seek to show an extreme situation they draw a flat ice surface with a snowhouse and two Inuit speaking to each other. However distorted the view may be, it is a natural one for city dwellers, just as northern people think city folk are too frenetic, busy and uptight for their own good. Nonetheless, the decison makers live in cities, and their attitudes, conscious or not, may create problems for northerners. To them, northerners may seem simply undeveloped or retarded southerners in need of more enlightenment, social programs and patient guidance. In some capitals like Moscow and London where centralist thinking may be quite unapologetic, further difficulty may arise.

Stable societies based now as traditionally on the harvesting of renewable resources.

Peoples could not have settled and stayed in northern areas had they not had a sustainable resource base, and it may be hardly surprising that such resources were ones of fish and forest, herds of land and sea, seasonal birds, and whatever else might provide some variety. Such a yearly cycle makes for a predictability and rhythm around which social life and culture revolve. The whaling festivals of summer in the Inupiat areas, or Greenland Inuit's modern/traditional summer Aasivik camp-in, are good illustrations. Anyone who has read the Icelandic sagas knows that much of the action took place at the annual summer meeting of the Althing outdoors at Thingvellir, not just a parliamentary session, but also a court, country fair and marriage market. Such lifestyles were familiar to the ancestors of southern Canadians until recently as well, before Canada's major urban resettlement. When social and other outlooks are so related to particular livelihoods and resources, one has a total system. Any major change of one or other element will affect the whole.

The utility and success of locally manageable and locally managed commercial, industrial or public bodies for development.

The previous point was not to suggest that northern peoples are not fully capable of managing change and managing enterprises. The point rather is that some change occurs on a scale which is beyond local capacities to control. The local person may become a minor employee in a large resource company; with exceptional technical and management skills (probably unattainable in his home area) he can compete with anyone in the firm. But an approach taken in various places and for various reasons has shown that when the local people manage an enterprise or other body for some identifiable local purpose and benefit, this may be the best way to accommodate, facilitate and benefit from change. In Alaska questions have been raised about the native profit corporations under ANCSA because these require much outside expertise and operate in a large-scale business climate alien to the communities and regions they serve. However, they may in time be seen in a different light if the local cultures can secure their collective identity and land base. The value of locally-run institutions like co-ops, development or fishing corporations, etc. is that they equip local people to develop the management, business and technical skills to deal with the growing challenge from outside business. They also enable local people to reorganise on their own scale and according to their own tastes to strengthen their control of local development in the face of outside challenges. They may also generate new types of revenue needed by a society in a period of change.

The frequency and bitterness of environmental protection battles.

The natural environment has been receiving more attention in recent years in northern industrial countries than was previously the case. Perhaps the dangers now seem larger, whether from oil tankers breaking up along coasts or the acid rain problem which keeps all of Canada mindful of the hidden costs of energy and industry. Given that the living environment is the source of livelihood for northern peoples, it is not surprising that they should be sensitive about risk-taking. The inability of southern planners to go beyond their mathematical odds for "accidents", usually found to be too optimistic, while northern people see how one bad move could eliminate their whole source of income, is as deep a conflict as one can imagine. Governments as

promoters of development and purveyors of incentives are often not very credible. Perhaps Norway's struggle over the Alta River hydro project was the most bitter example, destroying a country's peace and consensus, and in a country where virtually every individual is an environmentalist born and bred. It is remarkable that the woman who presided over the government which stood firm on Alta now heads the international commission on development and conservation to look into the fundamental policy changes needed to make development serve the world's future needs and present salvation. Meanwhile, it seems likely that an ever more informed northern public and an ever more desperate industrial and governmental élite searching for cheap commodities and energy sources will have ever greater conflicts with each other.

A general antipathy to industrialisation.

As much because of the lifestyle it brings as its pollution potential in sensitive environments, industrialisation finds little favour in the northern world unless it is in the form of reorganising existing renewable resource activities - e.g. fishing - for greater local benefit. The word itself may be misleading, but certainly the industrial way of life has faded everywhere while more capital intensive processes replace work forces. The promise of a post-industrial society is now held out. Industry used to be a dirty but necessary way to social and economic progress. But Iceland's people, probably the most educated on earth, per capita, are also perhaps those most determined to avoid heavy industry. Yet the country is wealthy. Given location, it is hard to see why the north would be very practical as an industrial area unless a significant resource - e.g. Norway's cheap hydro power, offshore oil - was available. But while far from manufacturing markets, the north may lie on shipping routes of the future, with polar ice-breaking transport cutting distances between some North Atlantic and industrial Pacific areas and allowing larger ships to pass than through the Panama Canal. Virtually all the trouble which governments have experienced with northern peoples has begun with proposals for industrialisation, be they marine transportation, oil and gas drilling, pipeline construction or mining. Increasingly northern peoples are insisting - e.g. Greenland's labour laws - that any planned industrialisation include package proposals for the training and employment of northerners.

The emphasis on resources development questions both on- and off-shore as an essential element of political conflict and aspirations.

This involves environmental damage prospects as with oil production, economic shares for northerners and the sort of alien activity which has disappointed northerners even where they have initially welcomed it. Just as industrial pressure brings northern areas into "the mainstream", the associated costs are so high that they are unendurable without significant benefit from the local resource development. The arguments in the NWT today about the need for revenues to enable the territory to cope with the impacts of change are merely a re-run of those used in what are now Alberta and Saskatchewan. There the federal-driven development and settlement of the Prairies proved impossible for the local authorities to handle. The best study of the integrated nature of the resources, northern claims and political development factors is Katherine Graham's recently published A Climate for Change, the final report of Queen's University's eastern arctic study.

Demands for greater legal rights to lands and resources and more self-governing powers and stronger representative institutions for northern peoples.

Whether they are called land claims or restricted fishing zones or something else, the struggles of northern peoples to establish clearly and definitely their ancient resources and occupations as being essentially their own go on everywhere. The fact that these northern people's uses and rights pre-date the legal systems to which they are subject does not make the task of clarification easier. Canadian Inuit, in particular, have gone to the top and demanded that as the third of three principles proposed in 1982-3 for constitutional entrenchment they be assured rights to their traditional economic resources, benefit from their exploitation in non-traditional and protection of the environment in which traditional economies are practised.

More northern self-government jurisdiction and stronger institutions to represent them in exercising it are, likewise, basic demands in all areas.

An ultimate willingness to accept political accommodations within existing state structures, with the potential these have to offer, rather than pursue separation.

The political challenge posed by northern peoples has been ultimately a moderate one. Only Iceland is independent, but that was more a matter of recovering its full independence and recognising that it had separate institutions in any event. The northern peoples are hard-headed - the reason they have survived - and are aware of the advantages which derive from membership in larger political units. The Canadian prime minister told native and northern delegates in 1984 that being a sovereign country might mean no more than printing exotic postage stamps, and said that an option like Nunavut where regional cultural identity and local management were reconciled with national opportunity and larger clout made more sense. Northern peoples would appear to agree. Yet this moderation seems to work against them sometimes, full separation being the only apparent fear that southern strategic thinkers have. With such drastic scenarios facing people who want improved services and basic legal and political rights, one may not be very optimistic for rapid progress in improving northern conditions. What has been won and what will be won seems to come slowly and in accord with sudden opportunities or constant pressures which northerners find themselves able to employ from time to time. Steady progress is nonetheless discernible.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Canadians have an advantage over some northern states because as a **federal system** we accept easily the notion of a division of powers between national and regional (provincial or territorial) levels. This should help us accept some advanced notions of northern self-government. But so fixed are our assumptions about a particular division of powers - i.e. that of the Canadian Constitution, notably sections 91 and 92 - that it is sometimes difficult to have a practical discussion. After all, Canada's division of powers was designed with 19th century farming and fishing communities in the St. Lawrence Valley and Gulf in mind.

We also may feel that certain **population** size is necessary for self-government, even though Manitoba at provincehood had many fewer people than would Nunavut, and certainly had nothing like the ease of transportation and communications with the rest of Canada, nor the education and information levels, enjoyed by Nunavut. If states are so anxious to claim the wealth of the northern peoples and homelands they have annexed or dispossessed, they can hardly claim that such people are too few for provision of relatively costly

public services and opportunities for real political participation. These few people are holding down vast riches for the benefit of the south. Such workers in state institutions whether DEW Line or weather stations usually can count on **superior** benefits and conditions, after all! Why not northern populations generally? Population figures have been used to obfuscate northern political discussions, but should probably be abandoned as a usable criterion. If a state wishes to occupy someone else's homeland for the riches to be gained, it can surely pay some fair rent. Perhaps northern regions will never be very populous, and perhaps they never have been, but if the northern societies are already older than the social systems of the states to which they are appended, their durability and viability should not be in question. In a state like Canada built on regions and cultures, the tyranny of numbers as a political device seems especially unacceptable.

The question of development philosophies and **social fabric** is another red herring. Why cannot traditional communities in the north accept industrialisation, population influxes, etc? That is the Canadian way, supposedly. It is not, of course. Even small towns have careful zoning policies to cope with new development and population. Development plans of any kind take into account the location of camps and installations so as to be as little disruptive as possible. More generally, someone seeking big city life is not apt to move to Tofino, BC; Charlottetown, PEI; or Igloolik, NWT. Even in a large city one may enjoy the diversity and mix of cultures, accents, lifestyles, but still seek a particular neighbourhood to live in. Cities, too, are aggregations of neighbourhoods, some traditional and some newly forming. The question is surely one of choice, and the people of the northern world should have no less choice than other Canadians. The northern circumpolar world is full of unfortunate examples of the tremendous collective, family and individual costs of unplanned demographic and developmental change.

Job preference for local people is an important element in defending and strengthening northern social fabric. In most circumpolar areas, and indeed in most jurisdictions in the world, various forms of local preference exist. Canada's new constitutional mobility rights clause works against this, however. The effect of that clause would be to continue to bring in outside workers for skilled jobs, putting the relatively under-educated northern people at a permanent disadvantage. Surely any serious "northern

development" must allow the human potential of the north to be developed. Furthermore, it is unfair that northerners should be put in a position where those governing them are forever outsiders unfamiliar with local community ways, cultures and languages. It would seem desirable that new arrangements in the NWT include a "notwithstanding" clause allowing the constitutional mobility rights provision to be over-ridden for five years during which time accelerated programs of job preparation and preferential hiring of local people proceed to make northerners equal in their own house. When one considers that this very question of local inability to fill responsible jobs has been a main cause of northern political unrest (as in other countries like Greenland), Ottawa might be more willing to look at this option with an open mind.

As **distinct cultures** occupying traditional territories the northern peoples should have fundamental rights as collectivities recognised in public institutions. The Norwegian work updating international native rights law insists that national governments have legal and moral obligations to protect and provide for such homelands. But in Canada as in the USSR it seems to have been the policy to wait until anomalous populations were outnumbered or assimilated to national norms before according them rights of self-management. Perhaps if more Ottawa decision-makers thought of themselves as Stalinists in their population policies they would think again!

The development of **political parties** in northern areas has a mixed history, although some observers believe that northern peoples cannot achieve their goals until they organise into strong regional parties promoting northern interests. No doubt the native peoples associations have played a similar role in Canada, although they have often seemed more like provisional governments with many administrative tasks and liaison functions. Political movements might well follow achievement of new political structures, e.g. Nunavut, after the present broad combination of forces and interests agreed on a program of initial political reform is superseded. The capacity of a national party to represent regional cultural interests may be doubted. And when a party does strongly identify, as the Liberals with Quebec, it may put itself in jeopardy in other regions. Certainly a party may espouse some regional interests at the national level, but as in some provinces, northerners may vote for a regional party in their territory and another party in national elections. Northern Norway is

a good example of how a national party's hold on a northern area has effectively prevented expression of special northern needs even while bringing many other benefits to the north. In Greenland the several parties are all strongly committed to Inuit identity and culture, and were an effective coalition during negotiation of home rule, but now follow their own very different viewpoints for resolution of problems within Greenland. As long as broadly based debate on self-government continues among native peoples and government, and some progress is made, parties may not be absolutely necessary. But when such processes end or slow down, or when regional political reform is delayed, genuine political movements may be the only way to move ahead.

Ethnicity in politics is an issue which deeply troubles many Canadians, including many northern Canadians. The problem only seems to arise where the cultural character of an area is in doubt. Immigrants to Quebec learn French as quickly as possible, whereas some old English families still have not done so because they have a different and disappearing view of Quebec's character. Greenland has asserted its Inuit and Inuktitut-speaking identity since home rule. During the referendum on home rule, the Danes in Greenland formed a committee to urge that Danes not vote; they felt that such an urgent political issue must be decided by the permanent residents. (Perhaps they also feared an outcome like that feared by federalists in the Quebec referendum, of a cultural minority blocking the majority's self-determination.) All political jurisdictions reflect majority values except, as in the NWT, where the majority population is subject to another people's system. The general Canadian system is, in fact, a British system adapted by the British in Canada. There is nothing wrong with that, but one should not claim that it is a system without cultural bias. The northern peoples in Canada have shown a readiness to adopt many features of that system, but they also want to have their own values reflected in systems which they use to govern themselves. The insistence of the 8th assembly of the NWT that "mainstream Canadian" (i.e. British) values be official in the NWT was repudiated quickly and clearly by the 9th assembly in 1979. But the NWT has yet to decide on the alternatives. At least there has probably never been anyone who moved into the Nunavut area thinking it would be just a little bit of Back Home.

Another level of expression for ethnic and cultural interests may be an **ethnic assembly**. Norway is now developing proposals for national, regional and local Sami

assemblies, and Finland has one working already. Canadian Inuit are considering an Inuit assembly for all of Canada to provide greater accountability and representativity, and to represent Inuit interests at the highest level. If such a body had a formal link with national Parliament and provincial or territorial assembly, and if it had some budgets and decision-making powers, it could provide assurances for Inuit that their collective cultural interests were safe regardless of possibly transient majorities in the Nunavut assembly. Dene have considered some sort of similar body as a senate or other level of authority in a Western territory. Such bodies could be provided for in the Canadian constitution, and/or in acts of the federal Parliament, and could have special roles in relation to certain classes of subjects such as national or territorial constitutional amendments.

Strict rules about **land ownership and use** apply in most countries, limiting the power of outsiders to take over or control land. In most northern jurisdictions around the world land is held in common, under public control, with private ownership limited or impossible. Modern planners looking at the best way to manage land and resources prefer that situation, allowing maximum flexibility as well as public accountability. It is the way Dene and Inuit have always approached the issue, too. Yet it is not always insisted upon in Inuit or Dene land claims today. In an area like the north where certain areas may be exceptionally desirable for many users while large spaces are of relatively little interest, it seems sensible to keep land in public ownership. One might, further, suggest that one way to resolve claims would be to guarantee aboriginal people a majority voice on a statutory committee or other land management body with decision-making power. Strong planning powers, e.g. those exercised by Inuit on the Alaska North Slope, may be as meaningful as ownership. Prior rights of native peoples to wildlife are already well accepted and protected in the NWT. A common land management régime might be easier to handle and make more sense, providing for more flexible development, than the sort of patchwork land ownership systems common to farming communities like southern Canada.

The questions of **resources and environment** are predominant in every northern area around the world. It is the more amazing, then, that otherwise prudent advisers and decision-makers in Ottawa believe that such matters are not important for northerners. On the other hand, northerners

and southerners alike fall into the trap created for them by our federal division of powers: they talk of jurisdiction and ownership in absolute ways. There are several issues. A governing jurisdiction should probably have a certain weight of experience and clout in dealing with large-scale industry. As a Texas oilman with one of the "Seven Sisters" confided to The Economist a few years ago when asked if his company would deal with a small jurisdiction like Shetland,

> Oh, yeah, we like the little guys. They're more likely to see things our way, know what I mean?

But that is no excuse for denying a population the right to benefit from and help decide on the development of resources in its area where the impact - whether social or pollution damage - must also be borne. The people of Nunavut rely largely on the ocean and sea ice for food and travel to food sources; if these are simply turned over to industry for shipping and drilling, as is now the case, Inuit are gravely threatened and conflict is inevitable. But a Nunavut government would not likely be able to afford ocean management equipment soon, even if it had the jurisdiction. Canadian federalism is more than the constitutional division of powers: it is a network of formal and informal arrangements among governments for the carrying out of public business. If northerners insist on fundamental points of right and ownership, progress may be slow in gaining adequate roles in resource management. But by sharing expertise, roles, etc., practical accommodations should be possible at once. In ocean management, for instance, the Nunavut Constitutional Forum is suggesting creation of a Nunavut ocean affairs office to enable it to achieve many of its objectives without opening up huge and probably counter-productive questions of the constitutional division of powers in Canada. Nonetheless, the federal insistence that all northern lands, seas and resources are the exclusive concern of Ottawa is so ridiculous that it damages what case Ottawa may have. It also will guarantee endless conflict with northerners, wasted time and money, and delayed development. On the other hand, that hard position serves the interests of native people to some extent because others are prevented from pre-empting future development choices while they are negotiating land claims agreements.

The **power of surrounding majorities** in the development of regional political forms must not be ignored. It is sheer fantasy to think that any group, least of all any small

group, ever has full power to set its own political course. That might occur if the group had so little power that its actions could affect no-one, but such is not the case of any native group in Canada. Robespierre, Lenin and Trotsky may have set up their governments with no-one else in mind, but they quickly found their countries at war with virtually the whole world and at enormous cost for failing to accommodate certain norms of conduct. The more usual situation is that a constitution is born out of a people's needs in combination with the desire of neighbours and strong vested interests for a stable and secure political environment. If a jurisdiction is too different or radical, it frightens its neighbours - as a model as much as a direct threat. Republican medieval Iceland made the kings of Europe fret, but it was far enough away that they didn't feel a need to invade. (However, the Church and Norwegian king did eventually bring it to heel.) And independent Iceland free of all blocks, nations and encumbrances found itself pretty lonely when locked into offshore disputes with Britain in recent years. The play of dependence and interdependence, independence and responsibility to wider opinion, is an endlessly fluctuating matter of judgment. The stakes can be high. If Nicaragua or other Central American countries like Grenada are too independent, they are invaded by the US. In areas like Canada, Norway and Alaska where northern peoples live in continuous land masses with other majorities farther south, or even around them, the development of political forms is extremely complex. A danger for Dene or Inuit self-government is that it might only be permitted on very small areas as with southern reserves and Bill C-52. Mindful of that the Quebec Inuit opted for non-ethnic regional government so they could have much jurisdiction over a large area, just as eastern NWT Inuit have proposed a strong Nunavut government capable of expressing and promoting their interests even at the risk of future population influxes. If numbers and financial resources are lacking to a jurisdiction, the exercise of power will be only theoretical.

NORTHERN CANADA AND THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH

Like the other peoples of the circumpolar north, northern peoples in Canada have relatively little energy, time or opportunity to develop international contacts. However, among many of these people the awareness is growing that they face common problems and are engaged in common

struggles. For instance, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference actively encourages contacts and information exchange.

Governments have long held the view that because the non-Soviet northern countries are friendly, there was no need to encourage contact among them. Groups and individuals could do that if they wished. Now, however, Ottawa appears to be re-assessing this policy and taking a more active interest. However, the prime Canadian contributor and the prime Canadian beneficiary of such contact would surely be the NWT. Part of the proposal for a Nunavut government contained in **BUILDING NUNAVUT**, indeed, is that a new government work with Ottawa to increase circumpolar contact to help solve common problems, benefit from useful experience elsewhere and strengthen Inuit culture.

It seems evident that as northerners in Canada work on problems of self-government, they could benefit from the precedents, the mistakes and successes, of people dealing with similar problems in similar areas abroad. The federal government has already been undertaking such studies in relation to future NWT political development. The national Inuit constitutional committee, ICNI, have been working on international material for some time as they develop their own thinking and proposals on self-government and related issues.

A group of northern states consisting of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Canada, with Australia and sometimes New Zealand joining in, now meets regularly to discuss international progress on aboriginal rights and self-government, and to define these for international conventions and studies. Certainly the experience of Canada and some other countries would be of benefit and provide hope to aboriginal peoples elsewhere, e.g. in Guatemala. On the other hand, there is a danger that such a group, taking the lowest common denominator and made up of person remote from the actual struggles for self-government, may become a ceiling, a maximum position, and hold back change. Inuit have been distressed, for instance, to learn recently from foreign diplomats that on northern tours they are briefed by federal officials to the effect that northern people's rights and self-government hopes are just silly and are going nowhere. If those diplomats watch the TV constitutional conferences and nightly news they will perhaps realise that such officials are either ignorant or mischievous.

There is every reason for northern people's groups and northern government bodies to take an interest in the many practical subject areas, as well as the major socio-political and legal issues, which are shared by them with northern peoples abroad.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is hoped that the experience cited in this survey, and notably the qualities outlined on pages 27-28 above and the further material on pages 35-41 will be useful to northern legislators, native leaders and governments in designing structures for the future.

Sharing ideas and experience is not a one-way venture. Northern Canada is a virtual laboratory for the resolution of worldwide problems of northern cultural identity, northern resources and environment management and northern self-government. Aboriginal leaders, scholars, and governments abroad are quite aware of this and are watching to see how things go in the NWT.

While the national constitutional talks focus on problems of native peoples' government and identity, the NWT, though new to the constitutional table, has unique and probably never-to-be-repeated opportunities to contribute. Sometimes when tempted to see itself as small and inexperienced in inter-governmental settings, the NWT might remember that it is the leading edge of a new Canadian majority, the northern and native 75% of Canada! While not the only jurisdiction affected, it is in the strongest position to take a lead in some, e.g. constitutional, work. No other government at the table has so much experience, nor such a great stake in the outcome. It can serve its own interests and those of all Canadians by illuminating the actual social and political forces behind northern and native demands for change. These forces are made clear by reference to the experience of other northern peoples. That they are not self-serving, nor whimsical, but profound concerns arising from basic problems should then be obvious.

In the Northwest Territories and some other areas of northern Canada the threefold process for aboriginal progress and self-government is now familiar. The Inuit, Metis and Dene today are working on three distinct but

obviously related levels to obtain control of their future by:

- changing the national Constitution;
- developing new governments in their homelands, under their control, and
- securing permanent rights through land claims agreements.

The Inuit of Nunavut, for instance, are willing to accept a government system which does not have permanent guarantees for Inuit qua Inuit - other than use of the Inuit language in government - because they believe that they can gain enough other rights through the Constitution and a Nunavut claims settlement that they would have adequate protection for the future.

There are other features which may be no less interesting for the future. The future of individual Dene communities, for example, and the ability of a single village to develop its own political future will be a challenge. Will such communities exist in isolation like some southern Indian bands as envisioned in the 1984 Bill C-52, or will they have strengthening relationships with other communities through regional groupings or within a whole territory? The special features which COPE has proposed for the Western Arctic Inuit, the Inuvialuit, and the emerging Dene tribal councils in the Mackenzie Valley recognised in a recent NWT law, are also important developments whose experience will be relevant elsewhere. No less important is the whole native/non-native relationship in the Mackenzie Valley - that is, how can two major population groups work out a political structure which secures the vital interests of each within a common system, or is it possible at all? Or may one develop a multi-tiered system providing protection of major cultural and social interests at local and regional levels, but a unified system at the level of a territory? These questions will be answered over the coming months and years.

Equally, there is no reason to believe that the present cards on the table are the only cards. Sometimes we fall into thinking that constitutional development is something lawyers do, but it is much more: the arrangements and power relationships by which interests, locales and peoples accommodate themselves and each other in a larger framework

to achieve broader purposes together. Those purposes may be defense in wartime, more clout in negotiating foreign trade agreements or larger local markets in which to sell one's products. For that reason the coming Canadian economic summit consultations and processes are as much a part of the larger "constitutional" picture as are the matters of local and regional government discussed in this paper. For that reason, too, any development in Canada or the north involving power, whether economic or social power, whether cultural or language security, or political change or foreign bans on northern products like sealskins or furs, are part of the "constitutional development puzzle" for the north. In other words, part of the NWT work in seeking more self-government is specialist and northern, but much is also part and parcel of the countless other processes which go on day by day in Canada.

The peoples of northern Canada are experimenting with a wide variety of forms to satisfy their need and their desire for a self-government which reinforces their culture and protects their economic options. Each area and each people, whether in Canada or elsewhere, has its own specific needs and its own logic for doing as it does. Nevertheless, others going down the same road have experience too, and we can all learn from each other. We can also change the idea that northern Canada is just another Canadian problem which can be solved by pushing some southern ideas, experts and prejudices northwards.

Notes.

1. Some people find it hard to accept comparative studies. They usually declare that because situations are different, therefore nothing is to be learned. However, the concepts, processes and politics which are the underlying elements of constitutional development may be compared from situation to situation, and the principles and even some of the forms by which solutions are sought.

2. CBC Morningside interview, October, 1984.

3. E.g. Inuit leaders meeting with Ambassador Yakovlev, Ottawa, July, 1983, and meetings between Inuit Circumpolar Conference personnel and Soviet representatives since.

4. United States Arctic Interests: The 1980s and 1990s, ed. William Westermeyer and Kurt Shusterich, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1984. (It is worth noting that several of the authors suggest that the USA accept Canada's claims to full sovereignty in the Northwest Passage as a goodwill gesture to a friendly and important neighbour.)

5. These are usefully outlined and summarised in a paper prepared for Berger's Alaska Native Review Commission, Alternative Approaches to Alaska Native Land and Governance by Professor Ralph Johnson, School of Law, University of Washington, Seattle, December, 1984.

6. Page xv in the very useful book The Scottish and Alaskan Offshore Oil and Gas Experience and the Canadian Beaufort Sea, J. G. Nelson and Sabine Jessen, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, Ottawa, 1981.

7. See my unpublished study for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (Constitutional Affairs, Corporate Policy Branch) on Norway and the Sami Rights Committee report, Norway: A report on current developments in aboriginal policy, by Peter Jull, June, 1984 (rev. 22/07/84).